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DEPT FOR AF/E AND S/USSES
LONDON AND PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS

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SUBJECT: EASTERN SUDAN OUTREACH CONCLUDES FIRST WORKSHOP

REF: A. KHARTOUM 1214
[1](#)B. ASMARA 126

[1](#)1. (SBU) The Peacebuilding Center for the Horn of Africa (PCHA) successfully concluded the first week of a five-part workshop series for eastern Sudan civil society leaders. A total of 24 participants traveled to Asmara to take part in the 10-day workshop, hosted by Dr. Taisier M. Ali, an exiled Sudanese professor who has taken residence in Asmara. Dr. Ali founded the PCHA with the intention of promoting regional dialogue and solutions. Since its inception, the PCHA has sponsored roundtable discussions, invited speakers from around the world, and has served as a meeting space for civil society leaders and political activists from the Horn of Africa region. While in Asmara, the workshop participants engaged in group discussions and heard from guest lecturers, including representatives from the Government of South Sudan (GOSS) liaison office, resident Darfuris, and the Eritrean government's (GSE) Sudan advisor, Abdullah Jaber. Participants hailed from a variety of civil society organizations and political parties, including the SPLM, the Sudan Communist Party, and even one from the National Congress Party (NCP).

[1](#)2. (SBU) Although the PCHA encountered relatively little difficulty in putting the workshop together, the NCP prevented four students from attending the workshop, stating that the four were involved in demonstrations against the NCP and had destroyed government property. The new head of security in eastern Sudan, Ayoub Abdulrahman (former Counselor at the Sudan embassy in Eritrea), is thought to be the person directly responsible for blocking the students' participation, Dr. Ali mused. Despite the minor setback, the participants all arrived in Asmara and enthusiastically engaged in the workshop agenda.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Embaffs engaged with the participants as well. While the poloff gave a lecture on Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycotts, drawing comparisons to Sudan's own Lubna Hussein (Ref A), the ambassador discussed future prospects for eastern Sudan after the 2010 election and 2011 referendum. The participants found the lecture on the Civil Rights Movement inspirational to their own political situation, and were particularly pleased with the Arabic translation of the initial letter sent around Montgomery to inspire collective action. Although the participants were largely hopeful for the power of civil society to encourage political change, they admitted to the ambassador that violence would likely resume in the east if Darfur remained unresolved.

¶4. (SBU) The next workshop is scheduled to take place in mid-December. Dr. Ali aims to complete the five workshops before the 2010 elections, allowing the participants time to implement the lessons learned in Asmara. Each workshop incorporates new participants in an attempt to allow maximum exposure to the workshop's resources.

¶5. (SBU) COMMENT: The Eastern Sudan Workshop Series, now in its second year of activity (Ref B), is perhaps the only area where the USG, GSE, and NCP coordinate on a single initiative, the successful implementation of the Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement. Despite minor roadbumps, such as the blocking of the four students from taking part in the workshop, the completion of the first workshop is a healthy demonstration of the power of civil society leaders to overcome political difficulties.

McMULLEN